

Special Pre-Synod Event to Be Offered by SEC and JWM in Tampa
Make Plans Now to Participate

As part of the offerings of General Synod this summer, the Southeast Conference Theology Among the People (TAP) program, working with Justice and Witness Ministries, will be sponsoring a pre-synod event called **“Fallen Is Babylon: The American Empire and the Commonwealth of God.”** This program will build upon the experiences of a TAP sponsored, week-long immersion trip to Washington, D.C. in October 2010 entitled, “Empire Unveiled: Powers, Principalities, and the Book of Revelation.”

“Fallen Is Babylon” will take participants on an in-depth analysis of the American empire and its impact on our lives. Throughout the day, study and reflection will be grounded in the powerful and disturbing texts of the Book of Revelation and its call to “come out of Babylon.” The Reverend Joyce Hollyday, former editor and writer for Sojourner’s Magazine and Co-Pastor of Circle of Mercy UCC in Asheville, NC, will guide participants through various texts of Revelation which point toward the great hope which God has for those living faithfully in the midst of the demonic empires of the world.

Consideration will also be given to the political and institutional realities of empires both old and new. The Reverend Tom Warren, pastor of the Pleasant Hill UCC in Tennessee, will lead participants in an analysis of the military, economic, and social expressions of the American empire today. The Reverend Kathy Clark, Associate Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference and Director of the TAP program, will lead an opening, closing, and special lunch-time worship service, reflecting at each point of the day on how and why worship can be a powerful form of resistance to, and transformation of, empire while living in the midst of its ever-present seductions.

Additional components of this day include analysis of the economics of empire led by Edith Rasell (JWM), how local churches can faithfully and creatively witness before the gods of empire led by Sandra Sorenson (JWM) and Bernice Powell-Jackson (First United Church of Tampa), and a “sackcloth and ashes” vigil for peace at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa on Monday, July 4th.

“Fallen Is Babylon” will be held on Thursday, June 30th at the First United Church of Tampa. The registration fee is \$40 per person, which includes lunch. Registration is from 8:00-8:30 a.m. with morning refreshments available. The formal program begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 5:30 p.m. Be watching the Southeast Conference website at www.secucc.org for registration information.